

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-27 are currently pending in this application. Claims 13-25 have been withdrawn from consideration and claims 1, 8, 10, 12, and 26 have been amended to further define the claimed invention. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced into the application by these amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 3-12, and 26-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,479,206 (Ueno et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,184,079 (Hoshuyama). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth in detail below.

Claim 1 recites in part:

...non-volatile storage means for storing white balance values set for the taken image obtained in past image taking...custom value setting means for setting a white balance value employed in the past, stored in the storage means as a custom white balance value for the taken image by a new picture taking...said storage means additionally stores said corrected detected white balance value set and employed at said white balance processing means as a white balance value employed in the past.

The white balance processing apparatus of claim 1 comprises a non-volatile storage means for storing white balance values obtained from a previously captured image. A value setting means sets a white balance value for a newly captured image from those previously stored in the non-volatile storage means. By utilizing a previously stored white-balance value for newly-captured images comprising

similar color tone to images previously taken in the past, appropriate white balancing can be achieved without the need calculate and store white balance data for each new image.

Neither Ueno nor Hoshuyama disclose or suggest this unique arrangement. As noted in the Action on pages 3-4, Ueno does not disclose the use of a storage means that "stores said corrected detected white balance value set and employed at said white balance processing means as a white balance value employed in the past." Similarly, Hoshuyama fails to disclose or describe this limitation.

The Action cites column 5, lines 10 to 15 of Hoshuyama as disclosing the above-noted feature. To the contrary, the cited portion of Hoshuyama teaches an R-gain and a B-gain for adjustment of white balance. These white balance adjustment gains are generated based upon color signals detected at a white balance sensor 86, which are then transferred to the CPU 21 and stored at a register therein. Accordingly, the R-gain and B-gain stored at the register within the CPU correspond to a "detected white balance value" from a newly captured image, in contrast to the present invention, which stores a "corrected white balance value" obtained from the processing of a previously captured image as required by claim 1.

Moreover, the "storing at the register" of the R-gain and B-gain is only a temporary storing for adjustment of a white balance for the taken image, which is erased when the camera is powered off. As a result of this arrangement, it is

necessary at the time of the next picture taking to obtain and store the white balance adjustment R-gain and B-gain from the new image.

The present invention uses non-volatile memory as the white balance value storage section 11, so that the stored content is not erased even when the camera is powered off. Page 11, line 28 to page 12, line 1. This results in the above-noted benefit, specifically, that the white balance value for a photographed image having a color tone similar to that of an image previously acquired can be readily obtained any number of times, therefore eliminating the need to reprocess each new photo. Thus, both Hoshuyama and Ueno fail to disclose or suggest "storing the corrected detected white balance value".

Because these features are not disclosed in either reference, claim 1 should be patentable. Claims 8, 10, 12, and 26 recite similarly limitations as those described above with respect to claim 1 and should likewise be patentable. Claims 3-7, 9, 11, 27 should be patentable at least to the extent they depended directly or indirectly from these claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 1, 3-12, and 26-27.

Conclusion

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this

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application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 1, 3-12, and 26-27, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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